

HAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN & DEPARTMENT HEADS - ROUNDTABLE WORK SESSION
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
July 17, 2006 – 7:00 PM

PRESENT: Virginia Bridle-Russell, Chairman
Ben Moore, Vice-Chairman
James Workman
Rick Griffin
Bill Lally
James S. Barrington, Town Manager
Michael Schwotzer, Finance Director
Arleen Andreozzi, Town Clerk
Joyce Sheehan, Tax Collector
Bob Estey, Assessor
Dyana Martin, Recreation & Parks Director
Kevin Schultz, Building Director, Building & Health Inspector
Catherine Redden, Library Director
John Hangen, Public Works Director
Jamie Steffen, Town Planner
Mark Gearreald, Town Attorney
Fire Chief Hank Lipe
Fire Chief Jamie Sullivan
Maureen Duffy, Administrative Assistant

REGRETS:

Chairman Virginia Bridle-Russell called the work session to order at 7:00 pm and introduced those in attendance.

Department Heads met with the Board of Selectmen to seek policy, direction and guidance in budgeting for 2007. The meeting gave each Director the opportunity to discuss the challenges and difficulties that each department is experiencing as a result of default budgets.

Maureen Duffy, Administrative Assistant and Supervisor of Welfare discussed her difficulties with attempting to hire a qualified Welfare Clerk at the rate of pay being offered. Mr. Barrington informed the Board that Maureen has been doing the job in addition to her own.

The Tax Collector, Joyce Sheehan stated that the department's server had to be replaced which was an additional expense for the year. The copy machine, printer and cash register also needs to be replaced.

Bob Estey the Town Assessor stated that he is seeking planning guidance from the Board. The last time that there was a measure and re-list in Hampton was in 1989. In 2008 the Town by state law will be required to do so again. Mr. Estey explained that if the town does not have a plan in

place before the state randomly selects Hampton to do the re-measure, re-list or the state will pick a company to do it. He believes that the town should be proactive in dealing with this situation and suggested that the Town have a four year program to raise and appropriate money to hire a company to do a revaluation. The other option is to hire someone to do the data collection to re-measure and re-list. The benefit of doing so would give the assessing office some control

Kevin Schultz, Director of Building as well as the Building and Health Inspector, captured the attention of Board members when expressing the critical mass that he and his staff are under every day. He conveyed the message that his department is in desperate and serious need of additional staff to support what is required by law and by Hampton property owners. Mr. Schultz said that there is \$40 million in valued construction in Hampton which requires inspection to ensure the safety and integrity of the structures. There are two full time building inspectors (Mr. Schultz is one) and one secretary and one part-time inspector. There are 18 to 22 inspections a week which take approximately three hours per inspection. Inspectors are to make certain that the structures are sound and that the electric, gas, septic have been installed correctly to ensure safety for Hampton residents occupying these dwellings. Mr. Schultz is also responsible for overseeing the Zoning Board of Adjustment, making the agenda and providing expertise. He also works closely with the Conservation Commission which is operated by volunteers. The volunteers do a lot of work to preserve and maintain the limited wildlife habitat and open spaces in Hampton. Mr. Schultz said that there is a need for the Town to provide the Conservation Commission a staff member to prevent volunteers from being harassed at their own homes by demanding citizens. Mr. Schultz is also the Health Officer for the Town of Hampton. It is an important role that requires him to determine if newly constructed hotels, daycares and restaurants as well as assess structural damage after a fire or mold damage under a flood, are safe and suitable for occupancy. In addition, diseases of concern such as West Nile, Triple E are under the Health Officer job title. Mr. Schultz said that there are "too many hats" for one department in such a busy community and his department desperately needs help. They have skipped burnout and have hit crash. To relieve the work and stress load he suggested that a zoning and code enforcer position be added and perhaps a conservation officer, health inspector as well as a part-time building inspector, and engineer are necessary for a town of this size. The building department also requires space and perhaps the former Town hall could be used.

The Town Librarian Catherine Redden said that the Library Board needs to have direction regarding the Town's plans with the old courthouse and the former Town hall. The current library needs more space and these lots could potentially be used to build a new library. She also recommended that a vision and master plan be developed for these lots as they could potentially be used to build a new library.

Recreation & Parks Director, Dyana Martin, like most Town employees, also wears three "hats". Her department also requires space and she too would like to see the former courthouse and town hall be used for a community center. Recreation facilities such as the skate park require repairs. She would also like to see Town tree work included in the budget. Mrs. Martin would also like to re-budget additional staffing hours for the parking lot to ensure that they can stay open longer. Mrs. Martin also feels that there is need for an addition program coordinator as there are so many programs that the recreation department now offers.

Arleen Andreozzi the Town Clerk stated that her office is also running out of space. As a state requirement her office collects and stores vital records as well as creates and distributes the Town ballot. The office will be going online with the states new software program to register cars. Mrs. Andreozzi also addressed her employees' wages as Hampton pays less then most towns in New Hampshire for the same job. The Town Clerk's office also requires a new copier and printer for motor vehicle registrations

The recently hired Finance Director Mike Schwotzer has only been on the job for a few weeks. Currently his employee Paul Paquette, (Systems Engineer) is invaluable to the everyday operation of the Town Hall. Everyday Mr. Paquette does his backups even if they are from home. Mr. Schwotzer would like to have back personnel so that Mr. Paquette can have a day off.

Public Works Director, John Hangen stated that the system is breaking. He said that the Town fixes things when they are broken rather than maintaining. Mr. Hangen understands that no one wants their taxes to go up, but if the system is to work it must be fixed. He said that the residents of Hampton do not trust Town representatives, directors or employees and they don't support the budget. Mr. Hangen discussed the obvious need for drainage improvements. He also suggested that it is time for businesses to pay for some of the services that the public works department provides, rather than town taxpayers subsidizing them.

Police Chief Sullivan noted that their department requires additional part and full-time personnel to manage the workload that citizens are demanding. In addition it is very important that police officers are well trained in order to provide a better service. He is very happy with the new police station and discussed the expense involved in maintaining the security system

The Town Planner Jamie Steffen said there is too much overlap with responsibilities in his department and the biggest need is keeping track of inspections. Though Hampton has a "small town feel", it is a big town with a lot of complex developments. He also believes that there is a need for an environmental conservation officer to ensure that the wetlands are protected. In addition, his office is very small and there is no space for applicants to layout their plans.

Fire Chief Lipe said that there are still staffing issues in the fire department. He said that there is a steady demand for EMS as the community expands. The most important needs for the fire department are staffing, facilities and training. He encouraged the Board to take a leadership role and give the department heads the guidance to provide the quality of service that people want and demand.

Town Attorney Mark Gearreald will be acting as the interim Town Manager after August 25. He emphasized the Town has experienced and dedicated employees and when given the tools can provide efficient and good service. He noted that for many Town voters a default budget seems like a wonderful way to keep taxes from going up however; staff are the ones who are paying with their fruitless efforts, extended hours, and their creativity to try to cope with the workload. He hopes that the Board will appreciate and address how the staff are struggling on a daily basis and take action to move the Town forward. In regard to the Legal Department, the lawsuits are more numerous and more complex which requires thorough research and is more demanding on his time. He also expressed his need for additional storage space. He is thankful for his wonderful

assistant who is working towards a law degree. He encouraged the Board to continue supporting her training.

Mr. Barrington thanked the Board of Selectmen and for the nine and a half years as the Town Manager in Hampton. He noted that there is a credibility gap in the community and it is failing the staff and Board. Mr. Barrington expressed his disgust in the method that the Budget Committee used to select the bottom-line figure. He strongly believes that it was a waste of tax dollars having each Department Head determine the cost of providing services and presenting it to the Budget Committee when in the end they picked a number out of the air. Mr. Barrington said that if it happens again this year, it should be criminal. He stressed that if the Town chooses to have a flat budget then the department heads will tell citizens what they are not going to have. The citizens are demanding more services yet refuse to pay for them. Either the Budget Committee needs to provide a bottom line figure before the department heads do their yearly budgeting or they need to start dismantling it. He said that department heads require guidance from the Board of Selectmen to put the budget together. They also need the Board to make the policy of what services will or will not be provided.

Chairman Bridle-Russell thanked the staff for their honesty

Bill Lally said that the Board will have to deal with the strain on staff by prioritizing and thinking creatively to reconfigure services. He emphasized the importance of reviewing the money spent and addressed the needs of each department.

Rick Griffin discussed the subject of using the former courthouse and town hall lots to restore or build facilities for the staff. The need of a town master plan was emphasized to address the overwhelming need for space.

Board members also discussed the drainage situation and would like to see the issue dealt with. They also discussed the need for additional staff and the importance of selling the 2007 budget.

Mr. Moore noted that every department's needs cannot be dealt with in one year as he is certain that tax payers will not support it. He also said that it is time for the voters to grasp the concept that a default budget does not cover uncontrollable increases in utilities, fuel and insurance. Mr. Moore questioned if some of the positions could be combined and recognized the need for additional staff in the fire, police and assessing departments. He also suggested that the recreational facilities that require repair be taken to the voters for consideration. Mr. Moore also suggested a reserve fund for retiree liability.

Chairman Bridle-Russell said that a decision on the Welfare Clerk position and a replacement for the IT personnel needs to be addressed as soon as possible. The Board asked Mr. Schultz to determine the structural soundness of the former town office so a decision of its future can be made. She also asked the Board to decide on whether the department heads should budget according to a flat line number or to needs.

Mr. Griffin MOTIONED that the staff present a needs budget. **Mr. Lally SECONDED.**

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

Mr. Moore MOTIONED to add the assessing data collator position to the operating budget. **Mr. Griffin SECONDED.**

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR

The Welfare Clerk position will be discussed next week.

The contracts with the Police Department need to be addressed.

Mr. Moore MOTIONED to adjourn the work session at 9:15 PM. **Mr. Griffin SECONDED.**

VOTE: UNANIMOUS FOR